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Retrospect: News from the Louise Pettus Archives  
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# Retrospect

News from the Louise Pettus Archives and Special Collections at Winthrop University

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October, 2012

Volume 8, Number 3

## Historical Preservation Fund Set Up for Archives



A fund has been established for the Archives by Joyce Plyler ('80, '10) with a generous gift in recognition of the importance of the study of the past and of its preservation for future generations. The Historical Preservation Fund will support the full mission of the Louise Pettus Archives and Special Collections, especially as it relates to the history of South Carolina. "Winthrop's Archives are a historical

treasure," said Ms. Plyler, "and greatly in need of support to increase the accessibility of its holdings for students and scholars." By providing seed money for the Fund, Ms. Plyler hopes to encourage additional contributions from those who equally recognize the value and necessity of preserving documents, manuscripts, artifacts and other materials that provide a window into the past. The Archives will benefit immediately and directly from the fund, which may be used for needed supplies and equipment, historical preservation, or to sponsor activities that encourage an interest in historical study and preservation.

For more information or to make a gift to the fund please contact Gina White at [whitegp@winthrop.edu](mailto:whitegp@winthrop.edu) or (803) 323-2334 or (803) 323-2210.

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## Quote of the Quarter

### Remarks on the death of Mark Twain



*Samuel L. Clemens (Mark Twain), America's greatest humorist and the Dean of American authors, died on the 21<sup>st</sup> of this month [April] at Redding, Conn. at the age of 74 years and 5 months. He was born in Hannibal, Mo. His was a unique position among men of letters, not only of this country but of the whole world. Some of his books were translated into a number of foreign languages. There was much good philosophy and wholesome truth under his humor. He had a quaint way of saying things which made them stick, for instance: 'I wouldn't give a cent to hear Ingersoll on Moses, but I'd give ten dollars to hear Moses on Ingersoll.' . . .*

Pres. David Bancroft Johnson (Winthrop's founder and 1st president) from remarks on the death of Mark Twain given at a student assembly on April 27, 1910

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## Photograph of the Quarter



It would seem that David Bancroft Johnson, founder and first president of Winthrop, rarely had his photograph taken with his wife Mai Rutledge Smith Johnson. This is an exceedingly rare photograph of the two of them. The Archives has only one other of them together. This photograph was taken in the early years of their marriage, ca. 1902 to 1905. Unfortunately, the photograph is not labeled with the date or the location.

D. B. Johnson was 46 years old and Mai Smith was 24 years old when they married. They had three children.

Dr. Johnson died in 1928 at the age of 72. Mrs. Johnson died 50 years later in 1978 on her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday.

For more photographs of Winthrop's past, check out our postings on the Dacus Library blog at [History Through the Lens](#).

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## Army Air Corps Cadet Visit



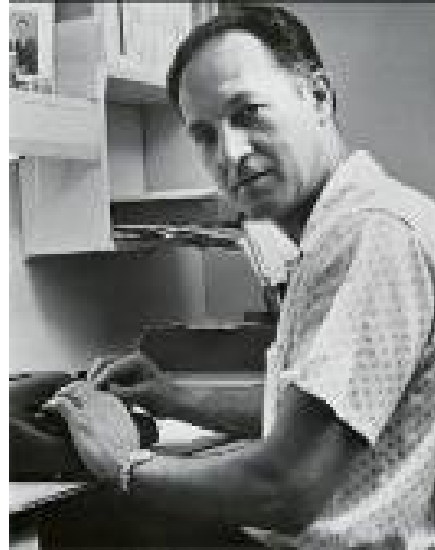
In 1943 the U. S. Army established the 41st College Training Detachment at Winthrop College to train young men for assignments in the Army Air Corps. These young men took classes at Winthrop, lived in "Fort Bancroft" [Bancroft Hall] and completed flight training at Roddey Field located just south of the city of Rock Hill off of SC Highway 72. On October 17, one of the young men returned to Winthrop. Richard Dinning paid a visit to campus to relive the memories of his experiences as a young private from

Michigan stationed at a women's college in the South for nine weeks in the Spring of 1943. He began his stint in the Army as a private and left it a captain. Capt. Dinning flew a B-17 bomber on 33 missions over Germany from 1944 to 1945. It all began with his training at Winthrop. During his brief visit this month Capt. Dinning took a tour of Winthrop remembering and recounting stories from his stay during WWII. He also gave the Pettus Archives a fascinating and delightful oral history interview in which he chronicled his time at Winthrop and his time in the Army Air Corps. Capt. Dinning turns 90 years old this month. We certainly thank Capt. Dinning for taking time to fly down to Rock Hill from his home in Massachusetts to visit us here at Winthrop and relate his story. For more information on Capt. Dinning's interview and when it will be available or information on the Pettus Archives' Oral History Program and how you can volunteer to help, contact our A-V Archivist Robert Ryals at [ryalsr@winthrop.edu](mailto:ryalsr@winthrop.edu) or (803) 323-2334 or (803) 323-2257.

On November 13 we will honor veterans for their service with our annual Veterans Day Reception at the Pettus Archives from 3:00 to 5:00 pm. The festivities will include an exhibit and refreshments. All are invited to attend.

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## Manuscript Collection Spotlight



### MATT CHRISTOPHER PAPERS, 1847-2007 (Accession 1092)

Matt Christopher (1917-1997) was a prolific author of children's books having written over 100 books as well as over 300 short stories and articles. Matt was gifted athletically and excelled in every sport as a young man and this love of sports steered him toward sports as the major theme in most of his writings. He even played professional baseball with the Smith Falls Beavers of Ontario, Canada, an affiliate of the Class C Can-Am League in 1937. Matt was the author of several mystery novels, action and adventures, as well as the "Chuck White" comic strip adventure series in *Treasure Chest* magazine. He also wrote screenplays geared toward a grownup audience and even dabbled in poetry.

The Matt Christopher Papers consist of published manuscripts, published short stories (1943-1994) (drafts, synopses, plot outlines, and magazines, comics, and newspapers with articles and short stories), galley proofs (1954-1990's), leather bound author's editions (1954-1991), and publisher's editions of Matt Christopher's children's books (1954-2004). The collection contains many unpublished manuscripts and drafts outside the children's book field (1954-1997), unpublished poems (1938-1993), unpublished screenplays (1940-1997), and unpublished short stories (1954-1997). Also included are taped (audio and video) interviews of Matt Christopher (1917-1997), as well as, puzzles for children (1988-1992), research materials and notes (1954-1997), sports rule-books (1954-1995), and writing guides (1909-1995), personal (1949-1997) and business correspondence (1952-2002), contract agreements (1952-1993), royalty statements (1954-1999), and biographical information (1917-2004), memorabilia (personalized baseball bat, framed pictures and award certificates, etc.), fan mail (1964-1999) and personal book collection (1847-1995) (some signed by authors). For a brief [biographical sketch](#) of Mr. Christopher, please go to the Archives web site.

For more manuscript collection highlights, visit our postings on the Dacus Library blog at [Archives Spotlight](#). You can also find out more about the [Manuscript Collection](#) or the [Digitized Manuscript Collection](#) by going to these pages on our website.

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### Thanksgiving Day Y.W.C.A. Field Day Exercises



The *Winthrop College Journal* was Winthrop's literary journal from 1902 to the 1964 when the publication became known as *The Anthology*. In 1902 the Journal was published eight times a year and contained poems, stories, essays, editorials, alumnae news, Y.W.C.A. news, and Winthrop events. In 1902, because students did not receive but one day off for Thanksgiving and one for Christmas, Winthrop organized events to entertain the students and keep them from becoming homesick. Following is an interesting description of the Thanksgiving Day Y.W.C.A. Field Day events from the December 1902 [Vol II, no.3] of the *Journal*:

“On Thanksgiving morning our annual Field Day Exercises were held from 12 to 2 o'clock. The weather was severely, cold—even a few flakes of snow falling—but this did not interfere with our plans. All the exercises went off admirably, no bones broken and no harm done. The contestants deserve much credit as they had had so little time for practicing beforehand. The results were as follows:

**Potato Race**—Winners: Marion Stringfellow, Pauline Whisnant.

**Sack Race**—Winners: Hallie Crouch, Mabel Kirkpatrick.

**Three Legged Race**—Winners: Isabelle Dacus and Mary Lyles, Kittie Kirkpatrick and F. Boyd.

**Relay Race** won by third line, with Mamie Gunter as leader.

**Obstacle Race** by three gentlemen of the faculty—Prof. Buist, Dr. Moncrieff, and Dr. Kinard.

Merriment prevailed on the campus and the special feature of the occasion was the Archery contest in which many took part, and zealously hit everything but the bull's eye.”



At left is a Mill League baseball player leaping to catch a fly ball at Rock Hill's Highland Park field ca. 1920s. This photograph is from the Mary Eva Hite Papers which are part of the Pettus Archives Manuscript Collection. For more information concerning the Hite papers please go to the [finding aid](#) on the Pettus Archives web site.

For information on the Archives' collections and holdings, how to donate historical material, or how you can help, contact:

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